SEQUEL TO NIVELLE OFFENSIVE 1545

When General Nivelle's plan was presented to the War Cabinet I said I did not believe in an early break-through such as he anticipated. I never have believed in a break-through of that kind, nor is an absolute break-through necessarily a preliminary to satisfactory terms of peace. If we sufficiently exhaust the enemy's reserves we may hope to attain such a measure of success as will persuade him that worse things are in store for him and that it is useless to continue the struggle.

6. *In the present battle we have done more than we expected (e.g. captured about 250 guns) and if the French have not done what they expected it is chiefly because their hopes were foolishly extravagant. They have not gained much ground, but between us we have made a much bigger hole in the German reserves than we thought was possible in the time. Out of 49 divisions originally available, 20 have been drawn into the fight on the French Front and 16 on ours. The fighting, though undoubtedly very heavy, is going slowly and steadily in our favour, and if the enemy were pushing us back every day and had already taken over 40,000 prisoners and 400 guns, I think we should not be without anxiety. Nor is he, as is shown by information received from Germany and the tone of recent German communiques.* For the first time in the War Germany is faced with really *Time on the* serious labour troubles at home.

General Groener's proclamation (Sir W. Townley's telegram of 27th April)

is clear evidence of this. Germany's plan is quite obviously to act defensively in the West and hold us up until her submarine campaign has had time to take effect. She is hopeful that this will happen before next harvest, for in the interval between this and then the privations of her people will be